

1 S.142

2 Introduced by Senators Ram, Lyons, Benning, Bray, Campion, Clarkson,  
3 Cummings, Hardy, Hooker, Kitchel, McCormack, Nitka,  
4 Perchlik, Pollina, Sears, Sirotkin, Terenzini, Westman and  
5 White

6 Referred to Committee on

7 Date:

8 Subject: General provisions; commemoration days; Overdose Awareness Day;  
9 flag flying protocol

10 Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to designate  
11 August 31 as Overdose Awareness Day.

12 An act relating to designating August 31 as Overdose Awareness Day

13 It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

14 Sec. 1. FINDINGS

15 The General Assembly finds:

16 (1) According to the Department of Health's Monthly Opioid Update  
17 (February 2021), in calendar year 2019, approximately 100 nonsuicidal drug  
18 deaths involving opioids were recorded, 87 percent of which were fentanyl  
19 related, and in calendar year 2020, the number of similar deaths increased  
20 to 134, 89 percent of which were fentanyl related.

1           (2) According to the Department of Health’s Opioids Scorecard, during  
2           the first quarter of calendar year 2020, nearly 1,700 naloxone rescue kits were  
3           provided to Vermonters as an overdose prevention measure.

4           (3) In fiscal year 2019, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
5           reported 128 drug overdose cases in Vermont, and in fiscal year 2020, the  
6           number of overdose cases increased to 146.

7           (4) Governor Philip Scott proclaimed February 17, 2021 as Recovery  
8           Day, demonstrating the State’s commitment to supporting those with mental  
9           illness, addictions, and co-occurring conditions.

10           (5) Annually, Overdose Awareness Day is observed internationally on  
11           August 31 to raise awareness of drug overdoses, to reduce the associated  
12           stigma, and to acknowledge the grief of the families and friends of persons  
13           who have experienced a drug overdose.

14           (6) Designating Drug Overdose Awareness Day as a Vermont  
15           commemorative day recognizes the importance of each person who has  
16           experienced a drug overdose, and it reminds Vermonters that death due to a  
17           drug overdose is preventable.

18           Sec. 2. 1 V.S.A. § 378 is added to read:

19           § 378. OVERDOSE AWARENESS DAY

20           August 31 of each year is designated as Overdose Awareness Day.

1 Sec. 3. 1 V.S.A. 496f is added to read:

2 § 496f. FLAG PROTOCOL; OVERDOSE AWARENESS DAY

3 The Department of Buildings and General Services shall direct, in the flag  
4 flying protocol established in section 496d of this title, that the U.S. flag and  
5 the Vermont State flag shall each be flown at half-staff, on all State-owned flag  
6 poles, on August 31 each year in observance of Overdose Awareness Day.

7 Sec. 4. EFFECTIVE DATE

8 This act shall take effect on July 1, 2021.